

**Homily for 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of advent – November 29, 2020**

**In the gospels, Our Lord often uses dire examples to warn disciples to be prepared and watchful, such as a wolf attacking the sheep, or a thief breaking in to steal.**

**I was given this kind of warning recently. During a ZOOM meeting this week, the priests of the Archdiocese were reminded, for the sake of our parishioners, to be watchful of our health regarding the Coronavirus. Every weekend there is at least one parish that does not have Masses because the pastor is in quarantine. We know about the virus. We know how to keep safe. But we still have to put that knowledge into practice. We still have to keep watch.**

**Today, Jesus uses an image that is not as dire – but it is just as important. His example is one in which the servants of a homeowner need to be ready to attend to their master’s needs as soon as he returns. Everything must always be in order. And the servants need to keep watch.**

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**One of the main beliefs we have is that Christ is coming again. And until He does, He has left us the job to proclaim salvation in Him to the world by our lives, our worship, and our teaching.**

**In Advent, particularly in these first days, we remember that we are longing for His return. He has triumphed over sin and death; but though we experience some of the effects of that in our lives, we still battle daily with temptation and oppression. We await His return.**

**People who see us should be able to make a connection between our care for each other and the world, and our faithful watching for Christ’s return. After all, His Second Coming is the hope that energizes us and comforts us.**

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**Paul speaks of the Lord’s coming in our Seconded Reading. Here, while he is still greeting them, he says, “I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to**

**Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

**My first reaction to those words is, ¿“Who, me?” ¿I am not lacking in ANY spiritual gift as I wait for Our Lord? That is a lot to be honored with. And of course, what comes with every spiritual gift is – responsibility.**

**In ordinary life, it is a regular reaction to complain about responsibilities that seem to be thrust upon us. Even in our faith, the reaction to our Christian mission is one of incredulity by those who say, “I had no choice in my Baptism.”**

**No one wants to be powerless. But, to use a well-known phrase from the superhero Spiderman, “With great power comes great responsibility.”**

**You would think the creators of that comic book were familiar with Christ’s words, “To whom much has been given, much will be required.”**

**Of course Our Lord also gave such words in order to encourage - as we remember from a couple Sundays ago, “Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.”**

**With Christmas gifts we do not always think of the responsibilities that go with them.**

**they are still gifts for which we are grateful.**

**We have been gifted to be Christian. We are not lacking in any spiritual gifts. These enable us to fulfill our responsibilities and to remain watchful.**

**Just as we experience joy in preparing for Christmas, Paul speaks joyfully of all the gifts given to the Corinthians as they wait for Christ. We await with joy as we prepare for both the celebration of the First Coming, and for the Second Coming.**

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**An observation was made recently that very few Christmas stories people tell or watch take place on Christmas day and during the Christmas season. Most of them take place during Advent. Most of them are about the adventures in**

**preparing for Christmas day. They are about the activities which anticipate Christmas.**

**Yes, I am one who suggests we try to squeeze in a few more Advent songs during this time and save Christmas songs for the day and the weeks that follow. But that doesn't mean we have to block out everything that anticipates Christmas. Especially this year, be attentive to what music and decorations help propel you into the spirit of this time of the Church year. God the Son took flesh. That is indeed something to think about and celebrate for an extended period of time.**

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**Still, one bishop presented a couple questions that might allow us to also remember the Second Coming of Christ. I give them here:**

**How much time, effort, and resource do I put into decorating and celebrating Christmas?**

**What resources and practices can help me prepare for the Lord's second coming?**

**When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Thy Kingdom Come!" If I knew that the Lord's second coming would take place in twenty-five days, what are some specific things I would do in the next few weeks to be prepared for that moment?**